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SIPDIS

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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM KIRF PGOV PREL KDEM NI

SUBJECT: GON COMMITTEE SAYS ALMOST 54,000 KILLED IN
PLATEAU STATE SINCE 2001

11. (SBU) Summary. A committee appointed by the Plateau State Sole Administrator reported on October 7 that nearly 54,000 people have been killed in Plateau State since the September 7, 2001, riots in Jos. Until now, total casualties nationwide during President Obasanjo's regime have been estimated at 10,000. End Summary.

12. (U) A Committee of Rehabilitation and Reconciliation of Internally Displaced People, appointed by the Plateau State Sole Administrator, who took over from suspended Governor Joshua Dariye when a State of Emergency (SOE) was declared on May 18, reported on October 7 that nearly 54,000 people have been killed in Plateau State since the September 7, 2001, riots in Jos. The chairman of the Committee said that about 19,000 men, 17,000 women, and 17,000 children had been killed, for a total of 53,787 deaths.

13. (SBU) The staff assistant to suspended Plateau State Governor Joshua Dariye told Poloff the Committee's figures were "outrageous and ridiculous." He pointed out that the methodology of compiling totals by collecting anecdotes from residents was not reliable, and claimed that the Committee did not cross-check existing state records before releasing the report results to the press.

14. (SBU) The head of the GON's National Commission for Refugees agreed that the Committee's methodology was faulty, but said that the overall number of deaths was "believable." He told Poloff that he was a member of the Committee that produced the report, but he was out of the country when the final report was compiled. He promised to forward a copy of the report to Poloff when he received it.

Comment

15. (SBU) Until now, total casualties nationwide since President Obasanjo was inaugurated in 1999 have been estimated at around 10,000. The new figure from this Committee in Plateau State alone would be several times the previous figure for the country as a whole. The explanation may lie in the upcoming expiration of Plateau State's six-month State of Emergency (SOE) on November 18, and the prospect of suspended Governor Dariye's returning to his office. The release of this report may have been a political move by the GON to block Dariye's reinstatement. It is the Presidency, however, that is responsible for Nigeria's security forces--the police, the military, and the State Security Service (SSS), and others.

ROBERTS